

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 HA-05 OMB-01 TRSE-00 AID-05  
IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03  
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INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
AMCONSUL LUBUMBASHI  
AMCONSUL BUKAVU POUCH

C O N F I D E N T I A L KINSHASA 8488

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINT, CG, BE, PINS, SHUM  
SUBJECT: MOBUTU STRIKES OUT AT BELGIUM AND HER PRESS

REF: (A) KINSHASA 8377; (B) KINSHASA 8473

1. SUMMARY: PRESIDENT MOBUTU GAVE A WIDE-RANGING INTERVIEW ON AUGUST  
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TO BELGIAN PRESS REPRESENTATIVES COVERING FOREIGN MINISTER SIMONET'S  
VISIT TO ZAIRE. THE ZAIRIAN PRESIDENT CONDEMNED BELGIAN PRESS  
COVERAGE OF ZAIRE AND LEFT THE IMPRESSION THAT BELGIAN/ZAIRIAN  
RELATIONS STILL HAVE TROUBLED AREAS. RADIO BROADCAST INTERVIEW AS  
WELL AS TV EXCERPTS INDICATED THAT MUBUTU BEGAN CALMLY BUT ENDED  
ANGRILY BY LECTURING THE BELGIAN JOURNALISTS ON PRESS CRITICISM  
OF ZAIRE AND UNCITICAL PROMULGATION OF STATEMENTS BY EXILED  
ZAIRIAN OPPOSITION ELEMENTS. END SUMMARY

2. THE ZAIRIAN NEWS AGENCY (AZAP) LED OFF ITS ACCOUNT OF THE INTER-  
VIEW WITH A THREAT BY PRESIDENT MOBUTU. REACTING TO BELGIAN PRESS  
REPORTS CRITICAL OF ZAIRE, MOBUTU IMPLIED A LINK BETWEEN BELGIAN  
PRESS REPORTING AND ZAIRIAN/BELGIAN RELATIONS. REFERRING TO THIS  
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LINKAGE, AZAP QUOTED MOBUTU AS SAYING, "FROM NOW ON WE SHALL DRAW  
THE NECESSARY CONCLUSIONS ABOUT RELATIONS BETWEEN ZAIRE AND  
BELGIUM."

AZAP CONTINUED THAT MOBUTU THEN DENOUNCED VARIOUS STORIES  
HE CHARACTERIZED AS "FALSE NEWS REPORTS" IN THE BELGIAN PRESS: E.G. O  
F  
NGUZA'S DEATH, A REBELLION IN BUNIA AND FINALLY THE "FORCED

DISPLACEMENT OF THE LUNDA." (REF B)

3. MOBUTU STRONGLY DENIED REPORTS OF LUNDA "DEPORTATIONS" TO KIVU. HE ADMITTED THAT DISPLACEMENT OF SHABANS HAD TAKEN PLACE BUT CLAIMED THAT THEY APPLIED EQUALLY TO ALL ETHNIC GROUPS IN EVERY REGION AND WERE AIMED AT THE "UNEMPLOYED AND SUSPECTS." MOREOVER, "THE GUIDE ANNOUNCED THAT 25 TRACTORS HAD BEEN FURNISHED TO THESE SUSPECTS AND UNEMPLOYED TO ALLOW THEM TO PRODUCE, DEVOTE THEMSELVES TO WORK AND TO BECOME SELF-SUFFICIENT." MOBUTU DENOUNCED BELGIAN PRESS COVERAGE FOR "REDUCING, THE WHOLE BUSINESS TO LUNDA PERSECUTION WITH AN EYE TOWARDS CREATING AND PERPETUATING A LUNDA PROBLEM FOR BELGIUM'S OWN REASONS."

4. MOBUTU ALSO CRITICIZED THE BELGIAN PRESS FOR ALLEGEDLY OVER-STATING ZAIRE'S PROBLEMS AND CONDITIONS. HE WENT ON TO ACCUSE THE PRESS OF "BAD FAITH," AND CHARACTERIZED THE COVERAGE AS "A CAMPAIGN OF DENIGRATION OF ZAIRE." CLAIMING THAT DEFAMATORY INFORMATION ABOUT ZAIRE WAS PUBLISHED ONLY IN BELGIUM, EVEN IF ORIGINATED BY EXILES IN US AND FRANCE, MOBUTU ASKED RHETORICALLY IF BELGIUM "WANTED TO BE THE MOST DEMOCRATIC COUNTRY IN THE WORLD." FINALLY, MOBUTU SAID HE COULDN'T STOP THE BELGIAN PRESS BUT HOPED THAT "BELGIUM REMAINED AT LEAST FAITHFUL TO ITS OWN LAWS ON THE SUBJECT.

5. COMMENT: PRESIDENT MOBUTU'S COMMENTS TEND TO CONFIRM OUR OVER-CONFIDENTIAL

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ALL IMPRESSION THAT WHILE SIMONET VISIT HAS HELPED PUT BELGIAN-ZAIRIAN RELATIONS BACK ON MORE EVEN KEEL, SOME TROUBLE-SOME ISSUES REMAIN. AMONG THESE ISSUES, OF COURSE, IS THE PRESENCE OF ZAIRIAN OPPOSITION ELEMENTS IN BELGIUM AND ESPECIALLY THEIR CONTINUING USE OF THE BELGIAN MEDIA TO PUBLICIZE ANTI-MOBUTU MATERIAL. IN THIS CONNECTION, MOBUTU'S EXPLANATION OF THE FORCED DISPLACEMENT OF SHABANS RAISES AT LEAST AS MANY QUESTIONS AS IT ANSWERS AND SEEMS UNLIKELY TO STEM INTERNATIONAL PRESS INTEREST IN THE ISSUE.  
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## Message Attributes

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